

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An electroless plating method comprising the steps of:

preparing a substrate having an insulating body and a conductive pattern formed on the insulating body;

adhering a catalytic metal serving as a catalyst of an electroless plating onto the insulating body and the conductive pattern;

~~forming coating selectively a protection film, or an oxidizing agent used to~~ which can oxidize the catalytic metal and make the catalytic metal in an inactive state to the electroless plating,

on the catalytic metal in a space portion S between the conductive pattern;

and forming selectively a metal layer on the conductive pattern by the electroless plating.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): An electroless plating method comprising the steps of:

preparing a substrate having an insulating body and a conductive pattern formed on the insulating body;

adhering selectively a catalytic metal serving as a catalyst of an electroless plating only onto the conductive pattern, except for an exposed portion of the insulating body; and

forming selectively a metal layer on the conductive pattern by the electroless plating.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): An electroless plating method according to claim 1, wherein the step of forming selectively ~~the protection film or~~ the oxidizing agent is carried out by an ink jet method.

Claim 4 (Original): An electroless plating method according to claim 1, wherein the step of adhering the catalytic metal onto the insulating body and the conductive pattern includes the step of coating an activating solution containing ions of the catalytic metal to deposit the catalytic metal by an oxidation-reduction reaction.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): An electroless plating method according to claim 1, wherein the conductive pattern is arranged in a state that the space portion between the conductive patterns has a plurality of different dimensions, and ~~the protection film or~~ the oxidizing agent is formed selectively in portions, which are smaller than a predetermined dimension, out of the space portion between the conductive patterns.

Claim 6 (Original): An electroless plating method according to claim 2, wherein the step of adhering selectively the catalytic metal onto the conductive pattern includes the step of coating selectively an activating solution containing ions of the catalytic metal on the conductive pattern by

an ink jet method to deposit selectively the catalytic metal on the conductive pattern by an oxidation-reduction reaction.

Claim 7 (Original): An electroless plating method according to claim 1, wherein the catalytic metal is palladium, and the metal layer formed by the electroless plating is a nickel layer or a copper layer.

Claim 8 (Original): An electroless plating method according to claim 2, wherein the catalytic metal is palladium, and the metal layer formed by the electroless plating is a nickel layer or a copper layer.

Claim 9 (Original): An electroless plating method according to claim 1, wherein the protection film is a resist film or a polyimide film.

Claim 10 (New): An electroless plating method according to claim 1, wherein the oxidizing agent is one of an H_2SO_4 solution and a mixed solution consisting of H_2SO_4 and HCl .

Claim 11 (New): An electroless plating method comprising the steps of:
preparing a substrate having an insulating body and a conductive pattern formed on the insulating body;

adhering a catalytic metal serving as a catalyst of an electroless plating onto the insulating body and the conductive pattern;

forming selectively a protection film on the catalytic metal in a space portion between the conductive pattern; and

forming selectively a metal layer on the conductive pattern by the electroless plating,

wherein the conductive pattern is arranged such that the space portion between the conductive patterns has a plurality of different dimensions, and the protection film is formed selectively in portions, which are smaller than a predetermined dimension, out of the space portion between the conductive patterns.